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Seventy-third year

Provisional

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Monday, 17 September 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

* Reissued for technical reasons on 19 September 2018.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Japan and the Republic of Korea to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: There have been several positive developments related to the nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over recent months. On 20 April, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced an immediate halt to nuclear explosive testing and flight tests of certain longer-range ballistic missiles.

On 24 May, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reportedly dismantled its Punggye-ri nuclear test site. It also reportedly dismantled missile-related infrastructure at the Iha-Ri missile test stand in May and the Sohae satellite launching site in July. However, international experts were not invited to witness any of these activities.

In the meantime, there continue to be signs that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is maintaining and developing its nuclear-weapons and ballistic-missile programmes. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remains unable to access the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and verify the correctness and completeness of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's declarations under its safeguards agreement. The Agency continues to monitor developments through commercially available satellite imagery where possible. In his regular report to the IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference submitted on 20 August, the IAEA Director General reported that the Agency had observed signatures consistent with the continued operation of the plutonium production reactor, radiochemical laboratory and alleged uranium-enrichment facility at Yongbyon.

The Secretary-General has welcomed the commitment made by Chairman Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 5 September to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

It is hoped that the positive developments that have been seen, together with the important summits between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, respectively, will contribute to an atmosphere conducive to advancing sustainable peace and complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean peninsula in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Security Council unity helped create the opportunity to engage diplomatically. A year ago, the Korean peninsula was the most tense and dangerous peace and security issue in the world. Today, progress has been made on building trust, reducing military tensions and opening or reopening channels of communication. A foundation has been established for making tangible progress on the core issues.

We encourage all Member States to support the parties in their diplomatic efforts and to ensure the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I have been asked to brief today on the United Nations Command, which is also referred to as the Unified Command. Security Council resolution 84 (1950), of 7 July 1950, recommended that all Member States providing military forces and other assistance to the Republic of Korea should

> "make such forces and other assistance available to a unified command under the United States of America"

and requested the United States to designate the commander of such forces. The same resolution also authorized the unified command at its discretion to use the United Nations flag in the course of its operations concurrently with the flags of the various nations participating.

In its first report to the Security Council on the operation of the Command, the United States informed the Council that on 25 July 1950 the Unified Command had been established, and the Security Council first used the name "United Nations Command" in resolution 88 (1950), of 8 November 1950. Notwithstanding its name, the United Nations Command is not a United Nations operation or body, nor does it come under the command and control of the United Nations. Furthermore, it was not established as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council and is not funded through the United Nations budget. As such, there are no reporting lines between the United Nations Command and the United Nations Secretariat.

The Secretary-General, during the upcoming high-level week of the General Assembly, will discuss how he and the United Nations system can further support the parties and how steps can be advanced towards sustainable peace, security and the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, in accordance with Security Council resolutions. He hopes that the inter-Korean summit that is starting in a few hours, as well as the planned summit between the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, will further contribute to this process.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

Whether international sanctions succeed or fail depends on the difference between words and deeds. Sanctions are just words on a page unless they are effectively enforced. Russia originally called for today's meeting to discuss the implementation of sanctions against North Korea. Then its representatives changed their minds. But we thought that the issue was important enough to bring forward and have a briefing. The United States welcomes the chance to examine the difference between words and deeds. We welcome the opportunity to see whether or not Security Council efforts to eliminate North Korea's nuclear- and ballistic-missile programmes are being honoured and enforced and if not, why.

The measures we adopted last year are something the Security Council should be very proud of. We achieved historic unity by implementing historic sanctions. The Security Council unanimously adopted three major sanctions packages, thereby creating one of the most restrictive sanctions regimes in history. Together, we have also implemented sanctions against dozens of specific North Korean individuals and entities supporting the regime's nuclear- and ballistic-missile programmes. All of us pledged a ban on North Korea's exports and 30 per cent of its imports. All of us promised to uphold the expulsion of all North Korean overseas labourers and stop all joint ventures. We supported a cap on North Korea's imports of oil and other refined petroleum products at 500,000 barrels a year, and a total ban on the export of North Korean coal. We all promised to expel North Korean overseas financial representatives. We agreed that North Korea should not be able to obtain chemical and biological weapons-related materials, and we all agreed to stop international scientific engagement with North Korea. Such sanctions were put in place for a very specific reason — to cut off funding and materials for North Korea's nuclear- and ballistic-missile programmes — because we know that the cash revenue going to North Korea is used to build its weapons programmes, not to help the North Korean people.

The difficult and very sensitive talks with North Korea are ongoing. The Trump-Kim summit has set us on a path to complete denuclearization. But we are not there yet and, until we get there, we must not ease the powerful worldwide sanctions that are in place.

It is important to note that, like the rest of the Security Council, Russia voted in favour of all of the sanctions I just described. Despite that, and despite not having yet come close to the achievement of denuclearization, Russia is now asking to ease the sanctions. Russia originally requested today's meeting for the purpose of criticizing the United States for blocking rail projects it wants to pursue with North Korea. Russia had planned on asking the Security Council to begin to remove sanctions on North Korea so it could pursue a project for its own economic benefit. The question one should ask is: Why? Why after voting in favour of sanctions 11 different times is Russia now backing away from them? We know the answer. It is because Russia has been cheating and has now been caught.

Despite its repeated support for United Nations sanctions, Russia is actively working to undermine the enforcement of the Security Council's sanctions on North Korea. Its violations are not one-offs. They are systematic. Russia has not simply looked the other way as its nationals and entities engage in activities explicitly prohibited by United Nations sanctions; Russia has

engaged in a concerted campaign in the Security Council to cover up violations of sanctions, whether committed by Russia or citizens of other States. The United States has evidence of consistent and wide-ranging Russian violations, which should offend every current and former member of the Security Council that knows how difficult it was to gain passage of those sanctions. It should offend every country that has felt the looming threat of North Korean nuclear weapons.

One of the main ways North Korea cheats is through ship-to-ship transfers of banned items, mainly oil but increasingly coal and other goods. To evade port inspections, oil tankers come together on the high seas. North Koreans use hoses to transfer refined petroleum products to their ships to bring back home. Many tankers are willing to provide oil to make a quick buck. One Russian vessel — the *Patriot* — was captured on film transferring refined petroleum in April this year to a North Korean-controlled vessel that is United Nations-listed. The *Patriot* helped the North Koreans evade sanctions by allowing them to obtain oil on the high seas without having to dock in a port, since the North Korean boat was subject to a global port entry ban.

With our allies and partners, the United States has evidence of many more ships we have uncovered providing oil illegally through ship-to-ship transfers. Just this year, the United States tracked at least 148 instances of oil tankers delivering refined petroleum products obtained through illegal ship-to-ship transfers. We estimate that North Korea obtained at least more than 800,000 barrels of refined petroleum products in the first eight months of the year. That is 160 per cent of the 2018 annual cap of 500,000. In reality, we think it obtained four times the annual quota in the first eight months of the year.

We presented evidence of those violations to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which tracks sanctions implementation, but Russia prevented the Committee from declaring that North Korea had exceeded its oil quota. Today, North Korea continues to illegally procure refined petroleum products with the help of Russia. Not only that, when we have pursued United Nations designation of the *Patriot* and other North Korean, Russian and other country flag ships that have been found to be illegally transferring oil, Russia has consistently blocked those designations in the sanctions committee.

It is not just on the high seas that Russia is aiding sanctions evasion. When North Korea assassinated Kim Jong-nam with VX, a deadly nerve agent, the United States moved to strengthen United Nations controls on the flow of North Korean chemical and biological weapons technology. Russia agreed with us in the Security Council but turned around and again blocked the sanctions committee from updating its 12-year-old sanctions list, which is critical to preventing the flow of dangerous weapons of mass destruction-related materials to North Korea. When North Korea began developing intercontinental ballistic missiles to target the United States and other nations with nuclear weapons, we tried to stop it, but even when it came to denying North Korea the means to deliver nuclear weapons, the Russians resisted the enforcement of the sanctions.

The list goes on. Russia agreed with the rest of the Security Council one year ago to sanction a North Korean operative in Moscow who was raising money for weapons programmes, but it never expelled that operative. And when it came time to act, not only did Russia fight to allow the operative to remain in its country, but it is also fighting for him to retain access to his Moscow bank account. For what? Is it to finance his illegal operations in Russia, in violation of the United Nations sanctions? Step by step, sanction by sanction and time and again, Russia works across the board to undermine the sanctions regime.

Last month, the independent Panel of Experts on the implementation of North Korean sanctions submitted its biannual report to the sanctions committee. The report contained evidence of multiple Russian sanctions violations. We have seen and read the report, but when the Panel submitted the report to the Security Council last week, we noticed something deeply troubling. The evidence of Russian violations that was detailed in the earlier report was missing. It has been removed from the open section of the report. Apparently, Russia threatened to prevent the release of the report unless its demands to hide the evidence of its violations were met. To our deep regret, the Panel agreed. That Russian interference was so egregious that the United States had no choice but to prevent the publication of the tainted report.

The United Nations panel of experts reporting process is our most valuable tool for ensuring that sanctions are implemented fully and effectively. It gives the Security Council and the world an impartial

and independent means of ensuring accountability for violators, and a warning to anyone who is considering violation sanctions in the future.

We have seen the Russian tendency to kill the messengers of inconvenient truths before. They did not like it when the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) concluded that Russia's client, the Al-Assad regime, used chemical weapons against its own people in Syria, so they just killed the Mechanism. Now, Russia has succeeded in discrediting the United Nations independent panel reporting process because it called out its violations. Russian corruption is like a virus. It is impeding our ability to achieve complete denuclearization in North Korea. It has now spread to the sanctions reporting process. If we are not careful, the sickness will make its way into the integrity and effectiveness of the Security Council itself.

Finally, let us look at why Russia is so focused on developing railways with North Korea — so focused that it will tell us today that we should remove sanctions. Russia's far-eastern region has few economic opportunities, but coal is one of them. Exporting coal has not been easy without a warm-water seaport. Russians have therefore been leasing the North Korean port of Rason. It poured a lot of money into building that port. We knew it was important for Russia, so we have exempted it five times since 2016.

But that is not enough for Russia. It wants sanctions relief so that it can connect its Trans-Siberian Railway to North Korea to ultimately reach a global port in South Korea. The problem is that it is not time yet to relieve the pressure on North Korea — no matter how lucrative it is for Russia. As we have all agreed, that time comes with denuclearization, and not before. Now is the wrong time to undo all the good work that we have done in the Security Council. Now is the wrong time to ease sanctions pressure on the North Korean regime by repealing sanctions, and it is never the right time to allow cheating to go unpunished. Every time the Security Council overlooks sanctions violations, and every time we allow the Russians to bury evidence of violations, we remove incentives for Pyongyang to end its nuclear programme.

The evidence we have presented today leaves Russia with a choice: it is binary — either it wants sanctions to succeed or it does not, and either it wants to deprive the Pyongyang Government of the means to finance its illegal nuclear weapons system or it does not. Unfortunately, I think that we know the answers to those questions. Either way, the Security Council can no longer be indifferent to Russia's actions. Russia must cease its violations of North Korean sanctions. It must end its concerted effort to cover up evidence of sanctions violations.

The final and fully verified denuclearization of North Korea is the international community's overriding objective. The evidence no longer allows us to take Russia's word that it shares that objective. Russia must now demonstrate by its deeds that it shares our objective in North Korea. The United States calls on all members of the Security Council to join us in demanding that the Panel of Experts submit its original report to the Security Council. Every member of the Council should go on the record on that request. Nothing less than the integrity of the United Nations and our unified approach to North Korea hang in the balance.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing this morning, and I would like to say that I am very happy to see our colleagues from the Republic of Korea and Japan around the table.

The situation on the Korean peninsula has momentous implications for international peace and security. The unity of purpose among Council members in addressing the situation has been decisive for the progress made so far. Continued unity in our approach will be critical to achieving our common objective of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The Security Council must stand with the same unity in the implementation of the resolutions we have adopted.

I would like to make three brief points on sanctions, diplomatic efforts and the humanitarian situation.

First, we must effectively implement and uphold the sanctions on North Korea until the demands of the resolutions are fully met. It is with great concern that we see widespread violations of the sanctions regime continue in a range of areas, including arms exports, petroleum trade and financial transactions. We call on all Member States to fulfil their obligations and ensure

their full implementation. We have worked actively in the European Union to ensure that all countries have the necessary guidance and capacity. We commend the thorough work of the Netherlands and the tireless efforts of our dear colleague, Karel Van Oosterom, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006).

The important work of the Panel of Experts should also be recognized, and we stress the need to respect its independence and impartiality. It is never acceptable for Member States to interfere with the work of the Panel of Experts, seeking to influence its findings and conclusions. That threatens to seriously undermine the integrity of the United Nations independent panel reporting process. Any difference of use should instead be addressed through constructive discussions within the framework of the sanctions Committee.

Secondly, diplomatic efforts and dialogue towards a peaceful solution should be encouraged, acknowledged and supported. We welcome the continued progress in the inter-Korean dialogue and the upcoming summit tomorrow. The inter-Korean family reunion process is also a positive step forward, and we hope that further such reunions can take place soon. The summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Singapore in June was very significant.

It is important now that both parties work to maintain momentum and take positive steps. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should without delay translate its commitments into legally binding undertakings. Signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would be an important step for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to demonstrate its seriousness. It is also important that the International Atomic Energy Agency get a role early in the verification of the denuclearization and disarmament process. We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General and the United Nations system stand ready to support those diplomatic efforts. Creative diplomacy will also continue to be needed in the next steps.

Lastly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, there is no doubt that the responsibility for the dire humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rests with the Government. At the same time, there are continued concerns about reports of the adverse indirect impacts of sanctions on humanitarian aid delivery and the ability of humanitarian organizations to respond to life-saving humanitarian needs. Enhanced efforts are needed to ensure that the humanitarian exemptions in our resolutions are effectively implemented.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the United States presidency for convening this important meeting on the North Korean issue, which has occupied the Security Council for many years. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, for her very enlightening briefing. I also welcome the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and Japan.

I would like to make three remarks today on the context, the approach that should guide us and the ultimate objective of denuclearizing the North Korean peninsula, on which we should all come together.

Developments in recent months have contributed to an easing of tensions. The intensification of exchanges among all parties and the relaunch of the inter-Korean dialogue are important and encouraging steps. But let us be clear — we are still awaiting the signs of concrete commitment on the part of the North Korean regime concerning the denuclearization of the peninsula. The International Atomic Energy Agency told us last month that North Korea was pursuing its nuclear programme. It is well known that Pyongyang continues to violate and circumvent sanctions on a larger scale and in an increasingly diversified and sophisticated way. It is also well known that Pyongyang is doing that by exploiting the shortcomings of the system and the gaps in the arrangements made by certain States, and in some cases their lack of will. It is not only a question of sanctions in the area of petrol; all sanctions are involved, from coal to the financial sector.

The report of the Panel of Experts (S/2018/171, annex), which we were able to consider in the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), has confirmed that to us once again. The report also indicates that Pyongyang is pursuing its nuclear and ballistic programmes, in violation of Council resolutions. That observation tells us that there is still a considerable way to go and that we must remain collectively vigilant to the highest degree. That is why the call for unity and resolve that has guided us so far must continue to prevail now more than ever. That requirement should entail three areas of focus in particular.

First, we need the strict, full and simultaneous implementation of the sanctions. We believe that such implementation is more essential than ever to preserve our indispensable leverage over Pyongyang with respect to serious negotiations on the denuclearization of the peninsula. That is the strategy we have defined together, and each of us must stick to it rigorously. Sanctions are not an à la carte menu from which everyone can pick and choose according to their wishes and preferences.

Turning to the second area of focus, we need rigorous monitoring of the actions taken by North Korea through the Committee and the experts who support it. In that respect, I wish to assure them and the Dutch chairmanship of the Committee of our full support. The Committee and the corresponding Panel of Experts are the most effective means of providing impartial information and of encouraging all States to comply strictly with their obligations. Their publicly available reports are also an essential tool for verifying the implementation of sanctions and for deterring anyone, including North Korea, from engaging in activities that would undermine the sanctions.

In that regard, France regrets the obstructions to the Panel's latest report. It is essential that expert panel reports be published without interference. Let us be clear. The professionalism and the quality of the work of the experts are measured neither by our satisfaction with their content nor by the a posteriori consideration of our views. The independence and integrity of the panels of experts are the DNA of sanction regimes, and there can be no question of altering or manipulating them. I wish to stress here France's extreme vigilance against any attempt at manipulation.

Turning to the third area of focus, we must be ready to toughen sanctions if necessary. They remain the best tool at our disposal to maintain the necessary pressure and send a signal of resolve to the regime. That is why we fully support United States efforts in that respect.

In conclusion, denuclearization discussions must clearly continue, but certainly not at the cost of relaxing our efforts. It is up to the North Korean regime to demonstrate through concrete gestures that it is sincerely ready to commit to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the peninsula. That must remain more than ever our common goal. France remains resolutely committed to its partners in that respect, both here and in the framework of the European Union. I call on the members of the Council to remain united in achieving this essential goal for international peace and security. It is my hope that the General Assembly will help us to move in that direction together at its next session.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing.

Since the beginning of the year, thanks to the joint efforts of the various parties concerned, the situation on the Korean peninsula has undergone positive changes. The issue of the peninsula has returned to the correct track of settlement through dialogue and consultation. The leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have met, marking a crucial step towards a political settlement of the peninsula's nuclear issue. China supports the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in resolving the nuclear issue on the peninsula through dialogue and consultations, and wishes to see both countries duly implement the outcome of their summit meeting in a continuous push for a political solution of the peninsula's issue.

China supports the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in maintaining dialogue and engagement and in pressing ahead with reconciliation and cooperation in a sustained manner. It is our wish that the summit in Pyongyang between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of the Republic of Korea will run smoothly and yield positive results. China commends the important efforts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to achieve the denuclearization of the peninsula and to maintain peace there. We hope that all parties concerned will work in synergy to consolidate the momentum of dialogue and rapprochement on the peninsula and jointly move the peace process on the peninsula forward for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Looking back on the evolution of events from several rounds of escalation of tensions on the peninsula since 2016 to a series of positive changes in the peninsula's situation this year, we draw three important lessons from that experience to inform and guide us.

First, we must uphold the goal of denuclearization. Making the peninsula nuclear-free is the essential requirement for lasting peace on and stability of the peninsula and an imperative for safeguarding the international nuclear non-proliferation system. The measures taken on the part of the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, such as the cessation of nuclear- and ballistic-missile tests and the dismantling of nuclear-test sites, have demonstrated its good will to push for the denuclearization of the peninsula and build mutual trust with the relevant parties. That is helpful to the political settlement of the issue on the peninsula. We hope that all parties concerned will show political wisdom and work together in a tangible manner for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

Secondly, we must persevere in maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula. Central to the peninsula's issue is the question of security. It is imperative to address the legitimate security concerns of the parties concerned in a proper and balanced manner in order to safeguard peace and stability on the peninsula in earnest. There is no military solution to the peninsula's issue, and confrontation is a dead end. Resorting to force will bring nothing but disastrous consequences to the peninsula. The suspension of the joint military exercises conducted by the United States and the Republic of Korea will help ease the situation on the peninsula. It is up to the parties concerned to continue to make the sensible choice.

Thirdly, we must strive to resolve issues through dialogue and consultation. History shows that dialogue and negotiation are essential means for promoting the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and for maintaining regional peace and stability. The positive progress in the dialogue and exchange between the North and the South on the peninsula and the summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea clearly bear witness to the necessity and the effectiveness of dialogue and consultation.

China has always been committed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to the maintenance of peace and stability on the peninsula and to the resolution of issues through dialogue and consultation. That position has always remained steadfast and will continue to do so in the future. As a close neighbour of the peninsula, China has maintained close engagement and coordination with the parties concerned in a responsible way, while promoting peace talks and working tirelessly to resolve the nuclear issue on the peninsula through negotiation. Our role in that regard has been constructive. In the light of the developing situation on the peninsula, China proposed a dual-track approach and the suspension-for-suspension initiative. The former refers to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in parallel to establishing a peace mechanism on the peninsula. Suspension for suspension envisions the Democratic People's Republic of Korea suspending nuclear and ballistic missile activities and the United States and the Republic of Korea suspending large-scale military exercises. China and Russia have also developed a road map for resolving the peninsula issue.

With regard to implementing the Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China has consistently and fully fulfilled its international obligations. Whenever the Security Council adopted a resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Chinese authorities concerned issued a timely notice for the implementation of the relevant measures on the ground. In accordance with the provisions of the resolution, China submitted an implementation report in a timely manner and regularly reported the crude oil supplied and the refined petroleum products exported to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It should be recalled that China has actively participated in the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). China will never allow Chinese citizens or enterprises to engage in any activity that contravenes Security Council resolutions. China will address any act found to have violated such resolutions and Chinese laws and regulations in line with the relevant laws and regulations. China's serious attitude towards implementing Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the significant cost to our country are clear to all. The reality has shown that China's proposed approach and initiative represent the right direction. The results are significant and are in the common interests of all the parties concerned. China has always constructively striven to promote the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. China will work with all the relevant parties to establish a nuclear-free, stable and prosperous Korean peninsula.

The current situation on the Korean peninsula is two-fold: there is a rare historic opportunity but also challenges. The parties concerned should make efforts in the following areas.

First, they should strive for progress in terms of dialogue and negotiation. In accordance with the phased and synchronized approach and as a package resolution, the denuclearization process of the Korean peninsula should be coherently linked to and coordinated with the

process of establishing a peace mechanism in order to achieve early results as soon as possible.

Secondly, the overarching direction towards a political resolution should be maintained. We hope that the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to maintain the momentum for dialogue and that they will properly resolve their differences on the basis of the existing consensus, meet each other halfway, take each other's concerns into account, continue to strengthen mutual trust and persevere in the negotiation process until it yields results and establishes peace.

Thirdly, in order to fully and comprehensively implement Security Council resolutions in the correct way, we must not only step up non-proliferation measures to promote the denuclearization of the peninsula but also actively strengthen the political and diplomatic approach in order to resolve the issue peacefully, while avoiding an adverse impact on the humanitarian and civilian needs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China is ready to continue to provide the necessary support and assistance to humanitarian activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Security Council resolutions clearly stipulate that, in the light of the progress on the denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the reversible provision should be considered and the corresponding actions taken at the appropriate time. That complies with the spirit of the resolutions and facilitates the denuclearization process.

In the current context, the Security Council should remain united, meet its historic responsibilities and strive for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and lasting peace and stability in North-East Asia. China stands ready to work with the various relevant parties within the international community and to continue to play a positive and constructive role for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula in the interests of peace and stability on the peninsula.

Last but not least, in her briefing Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo referred to what is known as the United Nations Command. I would like to affirm China's position in that regard. China is of the view that the so-called United Nations Command is a product of the Cold War era. Its name does not reflect the reality. It is not legitimate and brings to mind overtones of military confrontation. The so-called United Nations Command has long been anachronistic. It should not become an obstacle to reconciliation and cooperation between the South and the North of the peninsula.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): Before I begin my statement, I would like to convey our heartfelt condolences to the victims of Hurricane Florence. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones and with everyone in the Carolinas as they weather that storm. I would also like to convey our heartfelt condolences to, and solidarity with, China and the Philippines.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

They are also facing similar devastating storms, which demonstrate the dangers resulting from the phenomenon of climate change.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this meeting to discuss the agenda item "Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea". The request to hold today's meeting reflects your ongoing efforts in the area of denuclearization and your commitment to ridding the Korean peninsula from nuclear weapons. We would also like to thank Ms. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing.

The issues of non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction have always posed the gravest challenge to the responsibility that we bear for maintaining international peace and security. We are only nine days away from returning to the Chamber for a high-level meeting to consider the threat of those weapons to our world today, as well as to discuss the main tools at the disposal of the United Nations to limit such weapons and ensure international peace and security.

A few months ago, the situation on the Korean peninsula represented the most tense and dangerous situation with regard to peace and security. We all were concerned about the risk of military confrontation. However, those fears began gradually to subside after sincere diplomatic initiatives that resulted in the convening of two presidential summits in just two months. We look forward to the success of the summit between the two Koreas that will be held tomorrow. The resulting understandings in that regard were supported by Kuwait and the entire international community in order to achieve the desired goal of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and achieving peace between the two Koreas.

It is also important to underline that those diplomatic initiatives followed a series of resolutions

adopted by the Security Council. The coherence and unity of the Security Council have played a leading role in condemning all the illegal programmes and activities by North Korea, whether they be nuclear programmes or others related to ballistic missiles. It is critical that the Security Council remains united, firm and resolute in fully implementing all its relevant resolutions.

My country's delegation followed closely over the past two months the discussions in the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). I would like to first underline our appreciation for the great efforts made by our colleague the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom, Chair of the Committee, and then to underline our appreciation for the professionalism of the members of his Mission. We underscore the concerns of all parties involved, but the discussions that took place in that Committee over the past two weeks and what ensued were unfortunate and a source of concern for my country with regard to the possibility that the unity of the Council on this matter could be lost.

We call upon all parties to transcend our differences and assume our responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security. Adherence to the rules of procedure and safeguarding the independence of reports issued by groups of experts are matters that govern our work in the Organization. As Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, I am well aware that there is an urgent need to modify many of the matters affecting the work of the Council. However, until we are able to introduce the modifications that will improve the performance and work of the Council, we have no other choice but to work through the established procedures.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, as the Ambassador of Kuwait did, allow me to express our most heartfelt condolences for the victims of Hurricane Florence and other natural disasters in other parts of the world.

We also wish to welcome the representatives of Japan and Korea to this morning's debate. We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, as well as Ms. DiCarlo for her informative briefing.

On 30 August, the Security Council gathered to hear the briefing on the midterm report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). At its most recent meeting on this topic, the Council ended up discussing the reasons behind the blocking of the report as well as some members' disagreement about certain aspects of its content. As we have always said, we believe that the members of the Council know better than anyone the difficulties we encounter in discharging our mandate when we lack unanimity among our members. That is why we call for the work and decisions of the Committee to be reached by consensus. The same is true for the case under consideration — we must ensure that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea scrupulously adheres to and implements the sanctions unanimously adopted by the Council.

After the hopeful developments concerning the commitment to denuclearize the Korean peninsula expressed in April by the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Jong-un, alongside his counterpart, Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, and later in Singapore during the June meeting with Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, with agreements that included a set of principles to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea hopes that the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will honour those voluntarily agreed commitments and seek continued cooperation with the Security Council in order to fulfil its obligations under the Council's resolutions.

We are here to do what is right, namely, to promote international peace and security. As such, we must respect and truly analyse the information or concerns advanced by any member of the Council. In the case under consideration, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea will always promote international law, nuclear non-proliferation and negotiation. Those elements will always guide our position.

We must come to an immediate and common understanding of the aspects that affected the stalemate in the negotiations undertaken in June and April between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, respectively, on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The world's nuclear weapons, many of them on instant alert, continue to be counted in the thousands. If we want to prevent cascading nuclear proliferation, we need a major international effort and a sincere will to destroy them all. That is the position of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea — we must destroy all

nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in order for the world to live in peace and tranquility without having to fear the constant threat posed by such weapons.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to echo the Kuwaiti and Equatorial Guinea representatives in sending our condolences to all those around the world who have been affected by the recent hurricanes and flooding. I think the Kuwaiti representative was quite right in pointing out the link with climate change. It is one reason that the Security Council needs to stay abreast of developments on climate change. I thank him for raising that point.

I have listened very carefully to what colleagues have said this morning. The unity of the Council has been critical on this issue, all the more so because on other issues, including those relating to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), Council action has been blocked because of one Council member. We have a very significant opportunity to improve the strategic situation on the Korean peninsula. I think the Swedish representative referred to it as momentous, and I think that is exactly the right word to use. What is happening on the Korean peninsula has the potential to affect the countries of the two colleagues sitting at the table, but if we can get it right — if we can succeed at non-proliferation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — then we can improve the safety and security of the region and the entire world.

You said, Madam President, that the Council had adopted historic sanctions, showing historic unity. We have a real chance for success, and I find it very hard to comprehend why anyone, why one Council member, would put that opportunity at risk given what is at stake. The Chinese Ambassador referred to the 1950s and the Cold War. We do not debate how the Democratic People's Republic of Korea came to have nuclear weapons, but we all agree that it is vital to achieve denuclearization there. I will come back to that point in a minute, but it is a very serious issue. It has been hanging over the region and the world since the 1950s, and the Council has been united recently in trying to tackle it. We would appeal to all Council members to not put that unity at risk, but to continue efforts.

I want to thank the Under-Secretary-General for her briefing. I think there have been, as she said, some important political developments. We welcome the upcoming trip of President Moon Jae-in, and we hope it will further encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take decisive steps towards denuclearization. I did want to add, in that context, that there is no equivalence between WMD possession and threats to use them and the various bilateral cooperative military exercises that we have seen between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

I would like to echo other speakers before me in noting the fact that next week our leaders will be here for high-level week. These important questions will be discussed. People will be looking at the Council even more than usual to see our leaders take their responsibilities and deliver unity and progress so that this critical issue of WMD and nuclear proliferation can be properly addressed.

Turning to sanctions, all evidence related to sanctions implementation is reviewed with care, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's neighbouring States have a particular responsibility. Our unanimously agreed sanctions measures clearly draw a distinction between legitimate economic activity and sanctionable offences. I very much welcome the assurances that the Chinese Ambassador set out today.

We particularly need monitoring of coal and oil exports to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for the reasons you, Madam President, set out when speaking in your national capacity. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has shown itself able to seek creative ways to bypass checks and violate sanctions. We support the United States assessment that the Security Council-mandated cap on imports of refined petroleum has likely been breached. We need to be vigilant about that aspect, which includes ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum to vessels of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at sea. The cap demonstrates international commitment to upholding the rules-based international order. We call on all States, but particularly, given their special nuclear responsibilities, the permanent five members of the Security Council, to ensure that agreed sanctions are adhered to.

You, Madam President, mentioned the Panel of Experts, and a number of colleagues have also referred to it. We think it is important that the report of the Panel of Experts should be submitted in its usual form. The Panel has produced an extensive and well-researched report, showing the extent of sanctions evasion by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Security

Council has unanimously agreed a comprehensive set of resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and publication of these reports is one of the commitments we have all signed up to. We therefore look to all colleagues on the Council to enforce those commitments strictly, and I would like to stress that reporting by the independent Panel is an essential tool for carrying out sanctions implementation to the full and ensuring that evasions are clamped down upon.

On the United Nations Command, I take the points that have been made about history. As a number of colleagues have said, it is a legacy from the 1950s, and it is highly unusual. All requests for shipments of material in the demilitarized zone must be scrutinized and checked for compliance with sanctions. It is important that such diligence continue.

There has been really important outreach both by your Government, Madam President, and by the Government of the Republic of Korea, but, sadly, Pyongyang has not yet taken decisive steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. The Council debate next week will be a very important window of opportunity that should not be wasted. The United Kingdom is fully committed to supporting and assisting denuclearization in any way that we can. I hope that next week we can see very strong and firm Council unity in support of that goal and in support of full sanctions implementation.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the United States presidency of the Security Council for the initiative of today's briefing on the status of implementation of the sanctions regime for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation also thanks Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her very informative briefing.

Like others, I would like to express the condolences of my country and my delegation to the Government and the people of the United States for the consequences of Hurricane Florence's devastating sweep through certain states of the country, including yours, Madam President. More generally, I would like to express my country's and my delegation's condolences to all peoples who have suffered the consequences of climate change in recent times. All of those consequences serve to underline once again the need to awaken and prepare our collective consciousness for the fight against such climate disruptions.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the signs towards a resolution that have been seen on the Korean peninsula. Since the beginning of the year, these signs materialized in a series of important events, culminating in the historic summit held on 12 June in Singapore between the Presidents of the United States and North Korea. The meeting will undoubtedly be remembered as the event that would capture the attention of the international community and raise real hopes, given the risks of a military confrontation with potentially disastrous consequences.

My country congratulates all those responsible for those achievements and looks forward with great interest to the conclusions of the third summit to be held in less than a year between the North and South Korean leaders, which is scheduled for 18 to 20 September. Accordingly, Côte d'Ivoire urges the leaders of the two countries to continue along the path of dialogue and expresses the hope that the upcoming meeting will lead to the taking of concrete steps towards the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries, which would obviously constitute an important step towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction with the opening of a joint liaison office on 14 September, which is an important milestone on the path towards the reciprocal opening of diplomatic missions.

Notwithstanding those positive developments, my delegation remains concerned about the impasse in the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), following the presentation of the midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The report, which endorses the work of the Group of Experts and whose publication has been awaited for weeks, is now a source of contention among some members of the Committee. With regard to the main blocking factor, my delegation is of the view that it is essential, for the better implementation of paragraph 5 of resolution 2397 (2017), that all members of the Security Council agree on how to calculate the quantity of refined oil that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is allowed to import during each 12-month period. The lack of consensus on the issue is not only likely to hinder the effective implementation of resolution 2397 (2017), but it also has a negative impact on developments on the ground, thereby undermining hopes for the early denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

That is why Côte d'Ivoire calls on all parties to engage in dialogue and compromise in order to safeguarde the unity that has long prevailed among the members of our Council on the North Korean issue, particularly during the voting, in December 2017, on resolution 2397 (2017), which strengthened the sanctions regime. In addition, my country would like for the independence of the Panel of Experts to be preserved in order to guarantee the impartiality and objectivity of its investigations and the relevance of its recommendations.

Reports from various and consistent sources of recurrent violations of the Security Council sanctions regime by North Korea, through illicit oil transhipment operations, illicit arms trade and illegal financial transactions, are a cause of great concern. They reflect the porosity of the sanctions mechanisms that have been put in place and point to the magnitude of the multiple challenges to be overcome in the effective implementation of the sanctions regime. My delegation would also like to express its concern about extending the deadlines for the consideration of humanitarian exemptions. In our view, it is crucial the right balance be struck between the implementation of sanctions and humanitarian imperatives, as several humanitarian organizations recently sounded the alarm bell on the need to ensure food security in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea following the severe drought.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to our enduring common objective of the total denuclearization of the Korean peninsula as an indispensable precondition for peaceful coexistence among the States of the region. My country therefore encourages all stakeholders to show their resolute commitment to safeguard the gains in the interests of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We join others in expressing our solidarity with, and sympathy for, the victims of Hurricane Florence and other natural disasters around the world, which are becoming ever more frequent and intense as a result of climate change.

We want to thank you, Madam President, for having organized this meeting, and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Peru notes with deep concern the serious threat to international peace and security posed by the nuclear and ballistic-missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, the nuclear non-proliferation regime and specific decisions of the Security Council. That programme and all related activities must be completely abandoned in a verifiable and irreversible manner. Until that occurs, the sanctions imposed by the Council must remain in force and be universally implemented. Peru implements them within its jurisdiction and believes that the Security Council must remain vigilant and adequately respond to any possible non-compliance, wherever it may occur.

We wish to underscore the unity and commitment of the Security Council on this matter. We attach the greatest importance to maintaining that unity and commitment with a view to achieving the ultimate objective of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

At the same time, we commend the high-level diplomacy conducted by the authorities of the Republic of Korea and the United States aimed at building the trust required to alleviate tensions, reduce the risk of miscalculations or misunderstandings and, ultimately, achieve denuclearization.

In that regard, we stress that the sanctions regime is a tool for bringing the North Korean Government to the negotiating table, and should not lead to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country or restrict access to the assistance the civilian population needs.

Finally, regarding existing discrepancies in compliance with the restrictions on refined petroleum products, and the transfer of such to North Korean vessels, we must express our concern and underscore the need for strict respect for the provisions of resolution 2375 (2017).

In conclusion, we commend the work carried out by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), our colleague Ambassador van Oosterom, and underscore the need to safeguard the independence of the Committee's Panel of Experts.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to join my colleagues in expressing my solidarity and sympathy with those affected by the devastating force of the hurricane in the United States and the typhoon in Asia. They have our full support.

I would also like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her very informative briefing and to welcome the presence among us of our colleagues the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Korea and Japan.

This meeting is an opportunity to prove the Security Council's unity and strong will to uphold the implementation of the United Nations sanctions imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Those measures will not be effective unless they are being implemented honestly by all States.

The sanctions regime serves the sole purpose of limiting possible avenues for financing of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal military activities. As soon as a political solution regarding nuclear disarmament and the ballistic-missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is achieved, restrictive measures can be eased. But, in order to reach such an agreement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has yet to take concrete steps that prove its genuine will to denuclearize.

Poland is deeply concerned that Pyongyang has not stopped its nuclear and ballistic missiles programmes and continues to defy Security Council resolutions in an increasingly sophisticated manner. That includes illicit ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum products but also attempted supplies of arms and other military equipment to countries across the Middle East, continued abuse by diplomats of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of their status abroad, and other evasion practices.

We reiterate our position that, despite political and legal difficulties, it is mandatory for all States without exception to comply with obligations arising from the Security Council resolutions.

Peace on the Korean peninsula can be achieved only through dialogue. We welcomed the diplomatic process related to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, marked by historic summits in Panmunjom and Singapore earlier this year. We look forward to the third summit this year between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, beginning tomorrow in Pyongyang. We hope that event will help to reinvigorate and maintain dialogue on the peninsula.

Poland expresses full support and gratitude to Ambassador Karel van Oosterom as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) and his team for their hard work. We appreciate his efforts to ensure the greatest possible transparency in the Committee's processes.

Poland firmly believes that work of the 1718 Committee is instrumental to the achievement of comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible disarmament on the Korean peninsula. We were therefore disappointed that the midterm report of the Committee's Panel of Experts has not yet been published. In recent weeks, we have witnessed a dispute that is not only procedural, regarding the validity of certain formulations in the report. The sanctions regime imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has crucial meaning for regional and global peace and security, and reports of the Panel of Experts play an important role in implementation of the Security Council's resolutions. We are gravely concerned by the fact that there were attempts to actively interfere with the conclusions of the midterm report after it had been submitted to the Committee. To effectively implement the sanctions regime, it is crucial to uphold the independence and impartiality of the Panel of Experts. We also believe that the credibility of the Panel's reports requires that, once established, facts should not be negotiated. Each and every country has the right to disagree with the conclusions of the Panel, but that should not be to the detriment of the Panel's independence.

Reports of that body, acting under auspices of the United Nations, are perceived by a majority of States as the leading source of impartial information on the current status of the implementation of sanctions. It is therefore important to avoid ambiguity in the conclusions of the Panel's reports, as that may have potentially devastating effects for the effective implementation of sanctions.

Let me conclude by making a general remark concerning procedures applicable in work of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council.

Recent developments concerning the 1718 Committee prove that Chairs of sanctions committees need to have more flexibility in their activities. The current guidelines of the subsidiary bodies, which are much more restrictive than the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, often do not leave room for action by the Chair, even on procedural issues. That situation can be easily used to obstruct the work of the Committees.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I would first like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this

important meeting. We also thank Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Let me repeat the words of condolence expressed by our Kuwaiti colleague to you, Madam President, and to our colleagues from China and the Philippines.

I will focus on three aspects in my statement: first, the ongoing diplomatic efforts; secondly, the need for full and effective sanctions implementation; and thirdly, the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) and its Panel of Experts.

Let me also welcome to the Security Council our colleagues from Japan and the Republic of Korea.

With regard to my first point, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports the ongoing diplomatic talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that further steps can be taken during the upcoming inter-Korean summit as well as during a possible second summit between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There are obvious challenges inherent to such complex talks, but no efforts, in our view, should be spared towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Secondly, with regard to the need for the full implementation of the sanctions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should take meaningful steps to address the concerns of the Council. Those concerns are spelled out in the pertinent resolutions. Until those concerns are adequately addressed, the international community should maintain its pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In our view, it is therefore too early to talk about sanctions relief. Furthermore, current developments are a reason for concern. Let me mention some examples: first, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which remain a global threat; secondly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to actively evade sanctions in order to advance those programmes; and, thirdly, several countries are not fully implementing the sanctions.

Let me give some concrete examples about the latter. First, there is an increase in illicit ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum products to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; secondly, there is ongoing use of front companies and Democratic People's Republic of Korea diplomats to evade financial sanctions; and, thirdly, there are attempts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to supply arms and military equipment to actors in the Middle East. Those developments are very concerning. They should be a matter of grave concern to the entire international community, and especially to all members of the Council. We therefore call on all States Members of the United Nations to fully and effectively implement United Nations sanctions. In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), I will continue to do my utmost towards that end, together with my team.

That brings me to my third point, namely, the important role of the 1718 Committee and its Panel of Experts in that context. With the most recent Security Council resolutions, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions regime has grown to be the most comprehensive sanctions regime to date, and it is likely also the most complicated to date. The 1718 Committee plays a crucial role in implementing the resolutions by taking appropriate action in cases of sanctions violations, by providing guidance and support to the wider United Nations membership and by minimizing adverse humanitarian consequences of the sanctions.

The activities of the Panel of Experts, and particularly its reports, serve as a cornerstone of the United Nations sanctions regime on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is crucial that the Panel of Experts can work fully and independently. All Member States should fully respect the independence of the Panel of Experts. The Panel's reports are crucial for the decision-making of the Committee and the Council, and its reports are key for engagement with third countries. The public release of those reports is important in order to maintain the pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We express our support for the work of the Panel. With the expansion of the sanctions regime, the task of the Panel of Experts has become ever-more challenging. We would like to emphasize how crucial it is that the Panel can do its job in an effective and secure manner with full autonomy. The integrity of the Panel of Experts must be safeguarded.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports the ongoing diplomatic efforts. It is necessary to maintain pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through the full implementation of sanctions by all Member States. The 1718 Committee and its Panel of Experts play an important role in that respect.

Let me emphasize, as others have done, the importance of the unity of the Council in all of those efforts. A united Council has a tremendous impact. The stakes are too high for the Council to be divided on that matter.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We join others who have expressed their condolences for the victims of the natural disasters that have taken place in the past few weeks.

We also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing.

Bolivia categorically reaffirms its commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to their elimination and prevention in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council. In that context, we call upon all so-called nuclear-weapon States to take immediate action to eliminate their nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in compliance with Security Council resolutions.

With regard to the situation on the Korean peninsula, we reaffirm our commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1718 (2006) and subsequent resolutions. In that context, we have been strengthening national inter-institutional coordination mechanisms so that their implementation is effective and fully in line with their mandates. We also underscore the summit to be held in Pyongyang tomorrow, and we hope that it will be a step forward with respect to the commitments that must be fulfilled within a framework of consensus.

We reiterate that, for Bolivia, sanctions should not be an end in themselves, but rather should serve to bring the parties closer to the negotiating table and to a transparent dialogue where primacy is given only to the will to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict. My delegation is concerned that the imposition of sanctions has a direct impact on the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who, as we have heard on a number of occasions, have suffered from many shortages, especially with regard to health care and other aspects.

We reiterate the importance of complying with the Charter of the United Nations, under which the Security Council is the sole legal body that can take the necessary measures to maintain or restore international peace and security, thereby ruling out any unilateral action. In that regard, we once again express our full support for a negotiated settlement between the parties leading to the full denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. To that end, we are pleased about the progress made in the inter-Korean dialogue, which began with a bilateral summit held in the Joint Security Area between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and which concluded with the signing of the Panmunjom Declaration on Peace, Prosperity and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula on 27 April.

It is also important to note that, since that signing, significant progress has been made in the process of rapprochement between the two States, such as with the family reunions promoted by both States, which took place on 20 August, during which at least 180 families saw each other again after more than 60 years of forced separation following the Korean War.

Finally, we express optimism that, in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the inter-Korean meetings and talks, as well as the rapprochement between the highest authorities of the relevant parties and the high-level summit held in Singapore on 12 June between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, made it possible for them to join efforts in building a peaceful and stable regime on the Korean peninsula. We view this and other signals as the most important steps towards paving the way for a peace agreement that could put an end to this conflict.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We join other in expressing our sympathy to all those who suffered from the devastating hurricanes here in the United States, in the Carolinas, as well as in the Philippines and China.

We thank the United States delegation for having convened today's meeting and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her valuable update. We are also glad to see our colleagues from South Korea and Japan at this table.

Since this is the first public meeting this year on the issue, I would like to briefly express my country's position regarding the developments taking place on the Korean peninsula.

Unlike in the past, this year there have been many positive and historic events that demonstrate the relevance of the chosen path of political and diplomatic efforts. We can say that this is a perfect example of the spirit of creating and strengthening confidence-building

measures, which are the optimal and most pragmatic way of resolving bilateral and multilateral issues.

This is exactly what my President called for at the January high-level thematic briefing of the Security Council on non-proliferation and confidence-building measures (see S/PV.8160). He believes that this is an essential element in maintaining the global security architecture and strengthening peace. He has always been convinced that all conflicts and problematic issues related to weapons of mass destruction should be resolved through confidence-building and trust.

I would recall that President Nursultan Nazarbayev also stressed the need to resolve the issue of North Korea's nuclear programme by restoring these missing elements, especially among the United States, Russia and China. We would not like to see the contrary occur, which could send the wrong signal.

Unity in the Council must be preserved and used to achieve the overarching task at hand: the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Kazakhstan supports the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which is called upon to achieve this task by exclusively peaceful and political means. We acknowledge that sanctions in this regard are only interim measures until tangible steps on verified denuclearization have been taken on the ground in North Korea.

We recognize that the workload of the Group of Experts of the 1718 Committee is of the broadest scope and also the most complex. It is entirely permissible for the content and conclusions of the Panel's report to, at the same time, cause some controversy and disagreements among the Member States. We underline in this regard that it is not only important but imperative to ensure full proof and the veracity of all the facts and evidence as well as statistical data. This is crucial in order to elaborate proper recommendations and further measures.

As for the controversial points that have caused disagreements among some members of the Council, we hope that a speedy settlement can be reached on the basis of mutual respect and patience. Only then we can seek a common understanding and a pragmatic and comprehensive solution.

Today the situation on the Korean peninsula is much better and more favourable than ever before and prompts us to focus more on further developing goodwill, openness and mutual concessions.

Kazakhstan, which has practical personal experience in disarmament, understands how complex the process of denuclearization is. We therefore hope that the parties will be able to remain patient, redouble their determination and political will, and bring to bear extraordinary diplomatic skills and resources in order to successfully move towards achieving a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

We are firmly committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament and are ready to contribute in the most constructive way to all possible collective efforts in this direction.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): Madam President, we thank you for having convened this meeting and express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

May I also join my colleagues in expressing our deep sorrow and condolences to you, Madam, and to the Government and the people of the United States on the loss of life resulting from Hurricane Florence. Our condolences also go to China and the Philippines, and our prayers and thoughts are with the families that lost loved ones.

I also wish to welcome our colleagues from Japan and the Republic of Korea.

I understand that the Council had the opportunity to discuss the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea last month. We all have been observing the developments following the recent summit meetings, whose outcome had given us some sense of hope for progress towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the advancement of peace in North-East Asia.

There may indeed be challenges in the area of implementation, and we understand that this will not be an easy task. We hope that all the relevant parties will maintain the momentum generated recently with a view to finding a comprehensive and peaceful diplomatic and political solution to the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that is in line with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The Council must continue to support such endeavours. In this regard, the talks on a follow-up summit between the leaders of the United States and

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as plans for the holding of a third inter-Korean summit, are encouraging.

In the meantime, the implementation of the sanctions regime remains critical. We have noted from the recent mid-term report of the Panel of Experts that there have been implementation gaps in relation to the sanctions imposed by the Council. In this regard, the work of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) continues to contribute significantly to the full implementation of the Council's resolutions. This calls for continued cooperation on the part of Member States and for support for the work of the Panel of Experts.

Finally, preserving the unity of the Council in addressing the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains of vital importance. We should continue to encourage dialogue and the quest for a comprehensive diplomatic solution, with the ultimate objective of achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I, too, like my colleagues, wish to begin by expressing my deep condolences to all of those who suffered from the effects of the natural disasters in the United States, China and the Philippines.

I wish also to thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

Madam President, you suggested that we hold a Security Council meeting today in an open format; all the better, because we wanted to draw attention to the fact that Russia, China and other members of the Security Council have tried on many occasions, since progress was made in inter-Korean reconciliation, to initiate a positive reaction of any kind on the part of the Security Council to those events. I would recall that six months ago we would sometimes meet twice a week in order to discuss yet another launch of a ballistic missile by Pyongyang. But today we are already talking about the prospect of signing a peace treaty and the final rapprochement between the South and the North.

I would like the American delegation to explain to us and all other Members of the United Nations why it is opposed to the issuance by the Council of a presidential statement in support of these positive developments. It is blocking even such a reaction as press elements and refusing to issue any kind of a positive statement.

We have repeatedly stated that we fully support the negotiation process that began at the beginning of this year between the parties concerned. Russia also welcomes what has already been achieved: a reduction in military activity and the establishment of direct contact between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea and the United States.

A liaison office for the two Koreas opened several days ago in Kaesong. We also hope for a successful outcome to the summit set to begin tomorrow in Pyongyang between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

At the same time, we are seeing today that the negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are at the very least encountering certain difficulties. The negotiating process is a two-way street. Diplomacy in the twenty-first century, or in any century, for that matter, is such that it is impossible to come to an agreement if one party offers nothing in return for its demands.

No one doubts the fact that a nuclear-missile programme in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is unacceptable. However, what else can be expected when Pyongyang is called upon to comply unconditionally with all conditions under empty promises? The world has already had the opportunity to contemplate the price of such promises in May, when the current United States Administration decided that agreements reached by its predecessors under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action were bad and made the unilateral decision to withdraw from it. Thus, the promises made not only to Tehran but also to the international community were all broken.

The path to denuclearization must begin with the strengthening of confidence-building measures. For example, one such measure could be the signing of a peace treaty to end the war in Korea. We see that both Pyongyang and Seoul have already come quite close to achieving that goal. Restrictive measures imposed by Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot be an end in themselves. They should be a tool to engage the country in constructive negotiations. It is impossible to resolve the Korean peninsula's nuclear problem only through sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang. Sanctions cannot replace diplomacy.

With regard to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), the delegation of the United States has intentionally heightened tensions surrounding the issue of submission to the Council of the interim report of the Panel of Experts of the North Korean sanctions committee, and wishes to use the Council to impose its own view of the situation on the international community. As has often been the case with our American colleagues lately, today's meeting has become one on Russia, rather than on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is said that Russia is trying to exert pressure on the Panel of Experts. We would like to put a stop to such insinuations once and for all. In reality, the work of the Panel — which, for reasons beyond our control, has become increasingly politicized — was held hostage to the view of Washington. The Panel should be guided by the principles of objectivity and impartiality. Regrettably, the first version of the document prepared by it did not meet those standards. In that regard, we and other members of the Committee made some observations that the Panel of Experts perceived appropriately and took into consideration while preparing the report for the Security Council.

The Committee's rules of procedure provide for consultations with Member States on the content of reports. The Council should not see ill intent in the fact that Member States are not indifferent to the section of the report that pertains to the Member States concerned. The experts asked us relevant questions. It is perfectly logical that the answers we provided should be reflected in the report. However, in this case, exactly the opposite has occurred.

Russia has been consistent in its well-reasoned responses to the questions sent by the Panel, including in its responses to the accusations made prolifically against us today by the Permanent Representative of the United States. Our views were not taken into consideration. Unsurprisingly, therefore, we have insisted on having our position reflected in the document. Let me reiterate that this was not an attempt to pressure the Panel of Experts; it was done in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). I hope that no member of the Council questions the fact that if accusations are made, responses to them should be made with equal transparency. That is precisely why the Russian delegation insisted that its position be taken into consideration and reflected in the report in question.

After difficult negotiations, we believed that a compromise has been reached. I would like to stress that it was a difficult conversation, but at every stage of the negotiations, we managed to reach an understanding with all interested parties, including the American delegation. In her emotional statement, the Permanent Representative of the United States did not inform the Council that a compromise was reached with the agreement of its expert as well. What changed the next day, when it was withdrawn? I hope that the Permanent Representative of the United States understands that it was her own delegation that prevented the submission of the report of the Panel of Experts to the Security Council. That delegation is now preventing the publication of an independent report of the status of the implementation of sanctions on North Korea because it blocked the dissemination of its new version.

I underscore that it was signed by the entire Panel of Experts, including the American expert. Is the delegation of the United States preventing the reflection of views in this document that do not coincide with its own position? In that regard, the following question must be asked. Is it not the delegation of the United States that is currently putting direct pressure on the Panel by demanding that it change its independent decision on the report to be submitted to the Security Council?

The ball is in the United States delegation's court. It presents the issue as an egregious precedent that allegedly violates the independent status of the various Panels of Experts. However, the situation is exactly the opposite. Introducing changes into the report of the Panel of Experts is a perfectly normal practice in the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. We wish to stress that no one is undermining the independence of the experts, but let us not forget that they do not work in a vacuum. We need to avoid situations where the legitimate requests of Governments are not taken into account. Let me reiterate a few points.

First, with regard to the oil tanker *Patriot*, the Panel of Experts itself stated that it was not in violation of the sanctions regime. That statement is in the original draft of the report. Secondly, it is untrue that we allegedly removed the section about violations made by a Russian company. That is a lie It remains in the report, unchanged, only it appears in the confidential appendix with some additional details. Thirdly, we requested additional information and evidence from the United States on the issues of quotas and funding for the

representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Russia. We are still awaiting that information. We have been waiting for two months for information on the issue of quotas and four months on that of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Who is cheating the international community? Who is spreading lies?

With regard to the implementation of the sanctions resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we cannot fail to draw attention to recent developments on the peninsula. Some time ago, the so-called United Nations Command — let us not be deceived by the name; it is a military structure, led by the United States in the demilitarized area between the two Koreas, using the name of the Organization as a shield — blocked practical steps to implement the inter-Korean initiative to restore rail traffic. However, a connection between the railways of the north and the south is one of the central inter-Korean agreements fixed in the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula. As far as we know, the so-called Command did not allow specialists from either side to inspect the conditions of the tracks. Naturally, comments were made in the press, highlighting the fact that the United Nations was allegedly blocking the implementation of joint inter-Korean projects.

We thank you, Madam President, for your in-depth economic analysis of the issues facing the Russian Far East. In that regard, I would remind you that cooperation on rail transport, including the trilateral Khasan-Rason project, is not covered by the sanctions regimes, including resolution 2397 (2017). Instead of creating roadblocks, the Council should promote inter-Korean dialogue. However, Washington, D.C., is prepared to sacrifice all hopes for inter-Korean dialogue for its own opportunistic interests. What is the United Nations Command — an analog to the Berlin Wall in the twenty-first century? What is being done by the United States can be considered a violation of all Security Council responsibilities under all resolutions of the Security Council seeking a settlement to the North Korean issue through peaceful diplomatic and political solution.

On the other hand, such steps are fully in line with the so-called policy of maximum pressure on Pyongyang. Here, the United States is increasingly aggressive in trying to subjugate the Security Council. We are sometimes left with the impression that Washington, D.C., is beginning to confuse the United Nations Security Council with the United States National Security Council, and unfortunately, today's meeting is no exception.

We also draw attention to the status of the so-called United Nations Command in Korea. The Commander of those forces is also the Commander of the United States armed forces in Korea, as well as the Republic of Korea-United States Combined Forces Command. From the point of view of international law, when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea became full Members of the United Nations in 1991, the preservation of such an institution as the United Nations Command in Korea, which places the United Nations on the belligerent side of the civil war, is legal nonsense. In present conditions, as the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea officially declare their intention to prevent a new inter-Korean conflict and are calling for a declaration to end of the war on the Korean peninsula and the signature of a peace treaty, we must analyse the relevance of the role and troops of the United Nations force, which, as we all know, was established by resolutions 84 (1950) and 85 (1950), which were adopted against a particular historical background.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics boycotted those meetings of the Council, while the Kuomintang authorities occupied the seat of the People's Republic of China. In fact, the Unified Command bears no relation to the United Nations. We should therefore consider its withdrawal, in accordance with the decisions of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, which, for example, provided for the possible dissolution of the Command by 1976 and its replacement by Korean border troops in the event of further normalization of the situation on the peninsula.

The institutions and mechanisms of the United Nations and the Security Council should be used to support settlement processes, no to hamper them. The common goal of all States involved is to ensure the peaceful settlement of the rising issues in the region, including the nuclear issue, through dialogue and mutually acceptable arrangements. The development of inter-Korean cooperation is in line with that goal, contributes to easing tensions on the peninsula and confirms the commitment undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the beginning of the year to the normalization of relations with neighbouring countries and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

We emphasize that such cooperation should not violate the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Discussions on future cooperation projects and properly organized research efforts do not violate them. The Security Council and its decisions should not hinder but promote the rapprochement between the North and South. We invite the members of the Council to consider creating special conditions in the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) for temporary exemptions from the sanctions regime for the implementation of inter-Korean cooperation projects. As far as I know, both sides of the Military Demarcation Line share that idea.

The sanctions committee on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a clear example of what the destructive behaviour of some of its members leads to. It seems that the Committee is seen by the United States as a kind of club meant to punish the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for its intransigence in the negotiations. It is very convenient, under the cover of the collective name of the Security Council, to try to exert pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its bilateral contacts. Washington, D.C., methodically refuses to allow Member States and international organizations to have humanitarian, diplomatic and sports links in Pyongyang, although they have nothing to do with nuclear missile programmes. The requests sent by our American colleagues are in no way justified, since they are intended to be accepted as the absolute truth by other Member States. They make it impossible for the Committee to adopt any consensus decision, even of a technical nature.

In conclusion, we call on all parties to exercise restraint and we stress once again that the quest for a mutually acceptable political-diplomatic course is the only possible way to peacefully resolve the problems on the Korean peninsula and create strong mechanisms for security in North-East Asia, which is in the interest of all countries of the region. However, imposing sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang without taking into account its legitimate interests will make it impossible to achieve that. Once again, I draw attention to the fact that it was in that vein that Russia and China developed the road map for the settlement of the situation on the Korean peninsula that, even with its setbacks, is now being de facto implemented.

The Russian side stands ready to foster close interaction with all interested countries to ensure peace and stability in the region and achieve a comprehensive settlement of the problem on the Korean peninsula on the basis of equal and non-discriminatory negotiations with the participation of all interested States.

The President: I shall now make a further statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

"Deny, distract and lie." We have heard that same song many times before — whether it was aiding the Al-Assad regime with chemical weapons, the attempted murder of the Skripals with a dangerous nerve agent in the United Kingdom, election-meddling in the United States — which, by the way, did not work — or now cheating on sanctions agreements and getting caught. Lying, cheating and rogue behaviour have become the new norm of the Russian culture. The Russian Ambassador said "no one is denying the Panel of Experts". I take that to assume that he will allow the original report of the Panel of Experts to be released.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by thanking the United States presidency for convening today's meeting and for giving me this opportunity to take part in the discussion on this important issue. I would also like to thank Under Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing. Let me also echo the words of condolences extended to the victims of Hurricane Florence and those of other natural disasters in China and the Philippines.

It was about 10 months ago that I made my last statement at the Security Council meeting convened to discuss the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related issue (see S/PV.7996). Since then, dramatic changes have taken place on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia. The PyeongChang Winter Olympics in February provided a much-sought window of opportunity to defuse tensions on the Korean peninsula, and the leaders of both Koreas and the United States did not fail to seize it.

As a result, the two inter-Korean summits took place in Panmunjom in April and May, respectively, after a hiatus of 11 years, and the first ever United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit was held in Singapore in June, which opened a new chapter in the relations between the two countries.

Those developments have turned the atmosphere of regional geopolitics from one marked by escalating tensions to one marked by diplomatic efforts.

That turnaround was made possible through a well-measured combination of diplomatic tools. The Security Council and the international community were united in fully implementing the Security Council sanctions regime, sending a clear message to Pyongyang that its pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme will never be accepted. At the same time, the door for dialogue was kept open to bring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea back to the negotiating table. The United States took the lead in our efforts to that end, which was fully supported by the key countries in the region and the members of the Security Council in particular. I would like to also commend the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), under the able leadership of our Dutch colleague, and the Panel of Experts in that regard.

Let me emphasize that to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we need to work to make the most of the hard-won momentum for negotiations towards a diplomatic solution. That is exactly what the Republic of Korea has been working, on in close consultation, with the United States during the last several months. President Moon and President Trump have taken the lead themselves and have been directly engaged in the process.

As part of that process, in a matter of hours President Moon Jae-in will visit Pyongyang for his third inter-Korean summit. The summit is expected to add renewed energy to the current diplomatic process. We hope and expect that a significant breakthrough can be made during the summit meeting in Pyongyang, which in turn will help resume the stalled United States-Democratic People's Republic of Korea negotiations.

In the meantime, my Government reaffirms that it will work closely with the international community to ensure the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions as we seek to implement the 27 April Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula. No doubt, the road ahead will be bumpy. We must pursue our shared goal of the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with patience, persistence and, above all, a united stance and solidarity. In doing so we must also ensure that sanctions implementation and engagement work in a mutually complementary and reinforcing way, like two wheels of a bicycle spinning in unison. Mutual trust is essential to make progress in the negotiations. Therefore, we also need to make efforts to create an environment conducive to moving the negotiation process forward by gradually and steadily building trust. The ongoing inter-Korean dialogue will help create such an environment, and we look forward to the continued support of the international community for such efforts on our part.

Keeping in mind that common goal, and the need for a united approach to attain it, I must point out that openly debating the United Nations Command's legal status or its action on a specific issue that is not part of the agenda, especially in this official security Council meeting, seems rather inappropriate.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my sincere hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will seize the window of opportunity to ensure its security and a bright future by seriously engaging in the negotiations and prove its commitment to denuclearization by taking further meaningful steps.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to begin by joining others in expressing our deep condolences and sympathy for the victims and families of those recently struck by natural disasters in the United States, the Philippines, China and other countries. As a nation that suffers often from natural disasters, Japan feels very strong solidarity with the victims and their families.

I begin my remarks today by thanking you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting, and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

The world witnessed a historic summit meeting between the United States and North Korea. Japan welcomes that undertaking and strongly hopes that momentum will lead to the resolution of the nuclear, missile and abductions issues. We are at a critical juncture. Japan hopes that North Korea will seize this opportunity and take concrete steps to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges, as required under the series of resolutions adopted by the Security Council. We believe that only those steps will help North Korea realize a bright future.

While engaging with North Korea we must fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions,

for North Korea to understand that there is no other way but to change its policy. We must not waver in that determination.

I would also like to underscore that now is not a time to ease or lift any of the sanctions. If North Korea believes it can get sanctions relaxed while keeping its nuclear weapons, it would certainly reduce the incentive for North Korea to achieve complete denuclearization. Japan will spare no effort to ensure the effectiveness of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We must maintain the solidarity of the international community to stop sanctions-evasion activities.

In that regard, Japan shares the United States view that North Korea has breached the 2018 annual cap for refined petroleum products established by resolution 2397 (2017). It is important that all Member States immediately stop supplying refined petroleum products to North Korea. Japan will work closely with the countries concerned, including the United States. As already announced, some countries, including Japan and the United States, are engaging in monitoring and surveillance efforts against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers, with patrol aircraft stationing in Japan.

In order to achieve a comprehensive solution to the issues related to North Korea, we ask the Security Council to maintain its unity in fully implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions. We should neither lose sight of our common cause of achieving the complete denuclearization of North Korea nor allow the very authority of the Council to be challenged by diverting our attention away from cynical attempts to flout the existing sanctions regime. Japan will continue to accelerate efforts to ensure their effective implementation, together with all countries.

Finally, we sincerely hope that the inter-Korean summit meeting to be held this week will lead to concrete actions towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): You misunderstood me, Madam President. We stand ready to agree to the publication of a report that objectively reflects Russian concerns. Let me once again draw your attention to the fact that you are the ones preventing its dissemination. There is no other version of the report other than what the Panel of Experts has conveyed to the Security Council, which you have blocked. Therefore, Madam President, when you ask to revert to the original version, you are the ones who are exerting pressure on the Panel of Experts.

You perhaps did not listen to me attentively enough, Madam President, or perhaps your further statement was written beforehand. The lies and denials in our statement to which you have liked to refer to so much recently, as well as other insinuations shamelessly made against our country, were absent from our statement. What we did was to describe the reasons, very clearly and in great detail, as to why we agreed, along with other experts and including American experts, that the report should include the changes that reflect our concerns. That is a simple statement of fact. What you are trying to do is to intentionally ascribe political ill-intent. I also have a request for you, Madam President: please lift the hold on the report of the Panel of Experts and make sure that it sees the light of day.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.